

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT (GD)	DOCUMENT #	GD-DOC-001
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT HIERARCHY AND PURPOSE	VERSION #	1

Controlled Document Hierarchy and Purpose

Guidance Document

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT (GD)	DOCUMENT #	GD-DOC-001
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT HIERARCHY AND PURPOSE	VERSION #	1

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Document Hierarchy.....	3
Purpose and Scope of Controlled Documents by Level.....	4
Purpose and Scope of Level 1 Policies.....	4
Purpose and Scope of Level 2 Guidance Documents (GD) and Manuals (MAN).....	5
Purpose and Scope of Level 3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).....	5
Purpose and Scope of Level 4 Work Instructions (WIs).....	6
Purpose and Scope of Level 5 Supporting Documents.....	7
Closing.....	8

Dean R. - Sample

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT (GD)	DOCUMENT #	GD-DOC-001
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT HIERARCHY AND PURPOSE	VERSION #	1

Executive Summary

Understanding the purpose and scope of each document type in the document levels assures that the correct document format and content are used for documents at each level of the hierarchy. This guidance document discusses the purpose and scope of each document type in the Controlled Document Levels model.

Document Hierarchy

For a company to run efficiently, there needs to be a proper organization or hierarchy of documents and content. Inefficient or inadequate documentation can cause delays, unnecessary work, and, in situations where time is critical, even have emergency and safety implications.

Over time, companies accumulate documents and content. Information grows, and without a good organizational hierarchy, issues will arise. In addition, documentation that is not properly organized runs a risk of security breaches by having confidential information end up in easily accessible locations. All of these issues create increased costs and concerns for any organization.

This is where the documentation hierarchy comes in. Documentation hierarchy can be described as a framework to map out our documents and content so that it can be easily found and used efficiently. This framework allows us to identify the types of documentation and where to store them, making them easier to access when needed. It also provides an organized structure in which to place new information.

The purpose of the hierarchy is to separate documentation into tiers based on the type of information and the intended audience. The top tier of your documents contains the broad organizational policies that must be adhered to company-wide and move into more detailed and specific content with each consecutive tier, as illustrated in Figure 1. Document Hierarchy.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT (GD)	DOCUMENT #	GD-DOC-001
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT HIERARCHY AND PURPOSE	VERSION #	1



Figure 1. Document Hierarchy

Purpose and Scope of Controlled Documents by Level

Purpose and Scope of Level 1 Policies

Policies are at the highest level of process documentation. Policies communicate the corporate business objectives so business units can align their unit objectives to meet them. Policies are directives that communicate goals and boundaries from the organization's executive level to all employees. They provide structure for the various systems and business units created within an organization. The collection of policies should address major operational units of the organization and be targeted toward helping the organization meet its stated mission, purpose, and objectives. As such, policies should include approvals from one or more members of Executive Leadership, preferably at the President, Vice President, or Chief Officer level of management.

An effective policy:

- Identifies the business objective or activity that is the subject of the policy.
- Identifies the specific requirements that must be observed or met.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT (GD)	DOCUMENT #	GD-DOC-001
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT HIERARCHY AND PURPOSE	VERSION #	1

- Identifies the organizational unit(s) responsible for ensuring that the objectives are met and the requirements are adhered to.

Purpose and Scope of Level 2 Guidance Documents (GD) and Manuals (MAN)

Guidance Documents and Manuals are high-level documents that bring clarity and focus to complex systems and the mid-level documents that support them. GDs and Manuals provide a big-picture view of systems and processes. These documents provide the audience with a view of the activities, functions, units, and structures that make up the current or planned system(s) and describe how they work together to function as a system.

They can also provide an end-to-end view of inter-functional or cross-functional interactions and timelines that work together toward output and additional information that may not be required. They also provide additional information/background to support other controlled documents, such as standard operating procedures.

Purpose and Scope of Level 3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Standard Operating Procedures are mid-level documents that describe work processes and how to perform them. An organization puts work processes in place to gain consistency in work practices and products. SOPs also facilitate communication of approved work and work product methodologies that meet the organization's policy objectives. Standard operating procedures are built around specific process flows. The process flow chart provides the organization and detailed structure for creating an SOP. An SOP should accomplish objectives such as:

- Introduce the process in terms of high-level steps or discreet sub-processes used together to accomplish the objective or output of the process.
- It tells what needs to be done to meet the process objective.
- Define the boundaries of applicability for the process, including exclusions.
- Provide relevant background information (optional).
- Identify linked processes and sub-processes.